

# **Freeman Acquisition**

## **Geocaching Policy**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Freeman Acquisition Geocaching Policy is to successfully manage the popular activity of geocaching within the area known as the Freeman Acquisition. The term Geocaching will be used generally to represent not only Geocaching, but related similar activities such as Letter Boxing, Bench Marking, etc.

### **Goal:**

The goal of this policy is to provide guidance for the public taking part in Geocaching so that the activity can continue in a safe manner while protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources that are within the Freeman Acquisition, as well as maintaining public safety. The Department of Parks and Recreation recognize the popularity of this activity as well as the opportunity it offers for high quality recreation for individuals, groups, and families. Additionally, the Ocotillo Wells District and the Colorado Desert District hope that all participants in this hobby practice the “Cache In Trash Out” (CITO) policy described on the Geocache Website.

### **Authority:**

California State Parks is responsible for managing all activities within the California State Park System. The Ocotillo Wells District and the Colorado Desert District retain all rights and authority to authorize and manage the activity of Geocaching within its boundaries. If the District Superintendents or Designees determine that a cache was placed in violation of this policy the District Superintendents or Designees retain the right to remove the cache. If a cache is removed, the Ocotillo Wells District and/or the Colorado Desert District will attempt to contact the cache owner and return the cache. If the owner cannot be contacted the cache will be handled as lost property as described in the DPR Lost and Found Policy.

## Cache Placement:

1. Use environmentally friendly behavior when placing and/or seeking a cache. This would include, but not limited to, not causing damage to natural or geologic features, not bothering wildlife, staying on trails, not collecting naturally occurring items, or any other activity that could damage any natural resource. Please leave the area the same or better than it was when you arrived.
2. Use all due caution when placing a cache. Caches should not be placed in areas that would place a person in any danger. Some examples of a dangerous spot would be inside mud caves, on top of ledges, at the base of overhanging cliffs, etc.
3. Placement of the cache **shall not** require any change to the natural environment such as digging. The person hiding a cache may use nearby items, such as rocks, to aid in concealing the cache, if the items are loose on the ground.
4. Caches should not be placed within washes that will likely lead to the cache being swept away during flash floods. The flash floods that occur in this area take large amounts of water down stream into the sensitive San Sebastian Marsh. If a cache is placed within a wash, care should be taken so that it will not become dislodge and become merely litter.
5. Caches **shall not** be placed near or cause any travel near natural or historically sensitive areas.
6. Marks **shall not** be placed on any natural features to aid in the locating of a cache.
7. Caches **shall not** be placed within any State Park Structure or Facility.
8. Caches **shall not** be attached to any historic or archaeological or geologic feature.


### Cache Containers:

1. Containers **shall** be of a sturdy nature that can withstand the desert environment. Hardened plastic is not recommended as the desert environment can quickly destroy plastic and then the container itself and its contents become merely litter.
2. Containers **shall** have the ability to be secured in a fashion that would not allow any wildlife to gain access to the contents of the cache.
3. Containers should be moderate in size. Containers **shall not** be larger than 8" X 12" X 4" in size.
4. Containers **shall** be marked 'Geocache' and the name of the cache as it appears on the Geocaching website.


### Cache Contents:

1. Contents shall be of a family friendly nature, appropriate for all ages, and not be offensive.
2. Contents **shall not** be perishable, such as food, etc.
3. The cache should contain a log book for finders of the cache to log their visit.

The Ocotillo Wells District and the Colorado Desert District are advocates of responsible outdoor recreation and recognizes the enjoyment, fun, and recreation associated with Geocaching. The Ocotillo Wells District and the Colorado Desert District recognize that, in most cases, Geocaching is consistent with California State Parks Mission. The Ocotillo Wells District and the Colorado Desert District retain the right to remove a cache that it feels is in an inappropriate location, is causing undue impact on the park resources, or for any reason is deemed inconsistent with the mission and/or statutes of the California State Park System.

  
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